

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEVADA

KATHERINE MARIE WIDMER,

Case No.: 3:22-cv-00432-CSD

Plaintiff

Order

v.

Re: ECF Nos. 1, 1-1

KILOLO KIJAKAZI,
Acting Commissioner of
Social Security,

Defendant

Before the court is Plaintiff's application to proceed in forma pauperis (ECF No. 1) and complaint (ECF No. 1-1).

I. APPLICATION FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED IN FORMA PAUPERIS

A person may be granted permission to proceed in forma pauperis (IFP) if the person "submits an affidavit that includes a statement of all assets such [person] possesses [and] that the person is unable to pay such fees or give security therefor. Such affidavit shall state the nature of the action, defense or appeal and affiant's belief that the person is entitled to redress." 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1); *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1129 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc) (stating that 28 U.S.C. § 1915 applies to all actions filed IFP, not just prisoner actions).

In addition, the Local Rules of Practice for the District of Nevada provide: "Any person who is unable to prepay the fees in a civil case may apply to the court for authority to proceed [IFP]. The application must be made on the form provided by the court and must include a financial affidavit disclosing the applicant's income, assets, expenses, and liabilities." LSR 1-1.

"[T]he supporting affidavits [must] state the facts as to [the] affiant's poverty with some particularity, definiteness and certainty." *U.S. v. McQuade*, 647 F.2d 938, 940 (9th Cir. 1981)

(quoting *Jefferson v. United States*, 277 F.2d 723, 725 (9th Cir. 1960)). A litigant need not “be absolutely destitute to enjoy the benefits of the statute.” *Adkins v. E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co.*, 335 U.S. 331, 339 (1948).

A review of the application to proceed IFP reveals Plaintiff cannot pay the filing fee; therefore, the application is granted.

II. SCREENING

“[T]he court shall dismiss the case at any time if the court determines that-- (A) the allegation of poverty is untrue; or (B) the action or appeal-- (i) is frivolous or malicious; (ii) fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or (iii) seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(A), (B)(i)-(iii).

Dismissal of a complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted is provided for in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), and 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) tracks that language. As such, when reviewing the adequacy of a complaint under this statute, the court applies the same standard as is applied under Rule 12(b)(6). *See e.g. Watison v. Carter*, 668 F.3d 1108, 1112 (9th Cir. 2012) (“The standard for determining whether a plaintiff has failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted under § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) is the same as the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) standard for failure to state a claim.”). Review under Rule 12(b)(6) is essentially a ruling on a question of law. *See Chappel v. Lab. Corp. of America*, 232 F.3d 719, 723 (9th Cir. 2000) (citation omitted).

The court must accept as true the allegations, construe the pleadings in the light most favorable to the plaintiff, and resolve all doubts in the plaintiff’s favor. *Jenkins v. McKeithen*, 395 U.S. 411, 421 (1969) (citations omitted). Allegations in pro se complaints are “held to less

1 stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers[.]” *Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5, 9
2 (1980) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted).

3 A complaint must contain more than a “formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of
4 action,” it must contain factual allegations sufficient to “raise a right to relief above the
5 speculative level.” *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). “The pleading
6 must contain something more ... than ... a statement of facts that merely creates a suspicion [of]
7 a legally cognizable right of action.” *Id.* (citation and quotation marks omitted). At a minimum, a
8 plaintiff should include “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Id.* at
9 570; *see also Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009).

10 A dismissal should not be without leave to amend unless it is clear from the face of the
11 complaint that the action is frivolous and could not be amended to state a federal claim, or the
12 district court lacks subject matter jurisdiction over the action. *See Cato v. United States*, 70 F.3d
13 1103, 1106 (9th Cir. 1995); *O’Loughlin v. Doe*, 920 F.2d 614, 616 (9th Cir. 1990).

14 Plaintiff’s complaint names the Commissioner of Social Security, and she requests
15 review of the Commissioner’s final decision. (ECF No. 1-1.) Federal courts have sole
16 jurisdiction to conduct judicial review of the Social Security Administration’s determination in
17 this regard. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Upon a review of Plaintiff’s complaint, it appears
18 administrative remedies have been exhausted with the Social Security Administration. Therefore,
19 Plaintiff’s complaint shall proceed.

20 III. CONCLUSION

21 (1) Plaintiff’s application to proceed IFP (ECF No. 1) is **GRANTED**. Plaintiff is
22 permitted to maintain this action without the necessity of prepayment of fees or costs or the
23 giving of security therefor.

1 (2) The complaint shall **PROCEED**. The Clerk shall **FILE** the complaint (ECF No. 1-1).

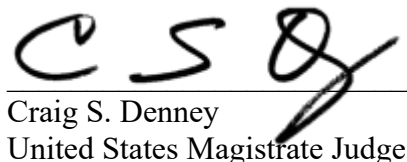
2 (3) The Clerk shall **ISSUE** summonses and **SERVE** the Commissioner of the Social
3 Security Administration by sending a copy of the summons and complaint by certified mail to:
4 (1) Office of the Regional Chief Counsel, Region IX, Social Security Administration, 160 Spear
5 St., Suite 899, San Francisco, CA 94105-1545; and (2) the Attorney General of the United States,
6 Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Room 4400, Washington, D.C., 20530.

7 (4) The Clerk shall also **ISSUE** a summons to the United States Attorney for the District
8 of Nevada and deliver the summons and a copy of the complaint to the U.S. Marshal for service
9 to the U.S. Attorney's Office at 400 S. Virginia Street, Suite 900, Reno, Nevada 89501.

10 (5) Once a defendant is served, Plaintiff must serve a copy of every pleading or other
11 document submitted for consideration by the court upon the defendant or, if an appearance has
12 been entered by counsel, upon the attorney. Plaintiff must include with the original of each
13 document to be filed with the court a certificate stating that a true and correct copy of the
14 document was served on the defendant, or counsel, if the defendant has an attorney. Under Local
15 Rule 5-1 the proof of service must show the day and manner of service and the name of the
16 person served. The court may disregard any paper received which has not been filed with the
17 Clerk, or that fails to include a certificate of service.

18 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

19 Dated: September 26, 2022

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21 
22 Craig S. Denney
23 United States Magistrate Judge